

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP



A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

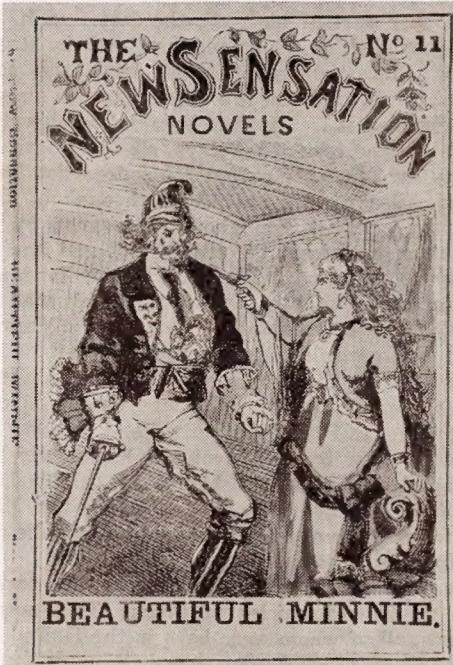
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Whole No. 483

Cleek And His Forty Faces; or T. W. Hanshew, a Dime Novelist who made good

By J. Randolph Cox



DIME NOVEL SKETCHES NO. 158

NEW SENSATION TEN CENT NOVELS

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Cleek And His Forty Faces; or

T. W. Hanshew, a Dime Novelist who made good

By J. Randolph Cox

In that area of mystery fiction bounded on the one side by dime novel derring-do and on the other by pulp magazine phantasmagoria, lies the domain of Hamilton Cleek. Once known as the Vanishing Cracksman, he stepped to the other side of the law as Scotland Yard's chief riddle solver. His major attribute (besides his intimate knowledge of the underworld) was his ability to disguise himself. He had been born with the peculiar talent (referred to frequently in the pages of his chronicle as his "birth-gift") to alter his features by sheer will power, "writhing his features" until he appears to be another person. Occasionally he would do this while someone else was watching.

He reveals his talents to Mr. Maverick Narkom (Superintendent at Scotland Yard) in the early portion of his first recorded adventure; in later years Narkom is to become Cleek's best friend. Two others share his secret: Dollops, the cockney lad who assists the forty-faced sleuth, and Ailsa Lorne. It is because of his love for Ailsa that Cleek reforms, becomes a detective and repays everyone from whom he had stolen. It is also due to Ailsa that he turns his back on another part of his past, the fact that he is really the true king of Maurevania (bounded, no doubt, on the North by Ruritania and on the South by Graustark). Since the regent, Count Irma, will not accept Ailsa as Queen of Maurevania, Cleek declines the throne, to the great delight of Dollops: "I'm glad you chucked it . . . It was breakin' my heart to think that I'd have to call you 'Sire' all the rest of my days, sir—like as if you was a bloomin' horse!" Curiously enough, this renunciation does not immediately lead to the altar. Cleek and Ailsa remain unmarried throughout the series.

Cleek is continually pursued throughout the stories by the ghosts of his past. Count Irma refuses to accept Cleek's refusal and has the detective-king kidnapped so he may be returned both to his native land and to his senses. Kings do not abdicate for the sake of a woman. (This was more than twenty years before Edward VIII was to set the example). "Maurevanian johnnies" (as both Dollops and Narkom call them) lurk everywhere.

If this were not enough, the Apache gang to which Cleek once belonged will not forgive him for going straight. He had once been consort to Margot, the Queen of the Apaches, and she does not intend that he forget. To them, Cleek the Cracksman has now become Cleek the Rat. Only his powers of disguise and his alert mind save him from being shot, stabbed, and dropped into the Thames or the Seine by the Apaches. Although the Maurevanian threat is lifted eventually when the monarchy becomes a Republic (with Count Irma as president), the Apaches remain tenacious enemies.

All of this serves as the basic framework of the series of novels and short stories known as The Chronicles of Cleek. They were the work of a family named Hanshew, all of whom were born in the United States, but moved to England where the Cleek stories take place. What little is known of their

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personal lives must be pieced together from a number of sources, including their own works.

Thomas W. Hanshew was born in 1857 and was already an actor at 14. He seems to have written many of the plays in which he appeared. According to a letter (by "G.W.J." of Hightown, N. J.) which was used as a filler in the *Dime Novel Round-Up* for August 1940, Hanshew wrote his first story at the age of ten and worked as a call boy (someone hired to summon actors when it is their turn to go on stage) in the old Brooklyn Theatre. He supplied the story for McKee Rankin's play, "The Forty-niners," and also wrote a play by this title himself.

During his years in the United States he wrote hundreds of stories for Frank Tousey, Street and Smith, Norman Munro, and others. He may also have been one of the many writers to use the pseudonym of "Bertha M. Clay" for that same letter goes on to say: "Upon his death his obituary notice told how after a quarrel with Munro, publisher, he ceased to write under his own name and fooled Munro with his Bertha M. Clay stories."

This obituary has not been traced (it does not appear in the *London Times*) and the letter referred to seems to have been in reply to Gilbert Patten's two part article, "Dime Novel Days," in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1931.

Hanshew, like most dime novel writers, used his own name as well as several pen names on his stories; he also wrote individual stories for various series under house names. It is doubtful whether any definitive list of his works will ever be compiled. Some of the names he used (besides "Bertha M. Clay") are F. M. Cobb, H. O. Cooke, Robert S. Davis, A. M. Douglas, Alexander Douglas, Meta De Vere, R. T. Emmett, Catherine Earnshaw, William S. Hall, Horace S. Harley, Fay B. Rathburne, Adelaide Fox Robinson, J. R. Scott, and Grace Thornton. These names may be found in an unpublished bibliography, *The Crime Book Check List*, compiled in the 1940s by a man named Talbot C. Hatch. It may have been done for the editor of *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*. The location of the original typescript is unknown; a carbon is in the possession of Allen J. Hubin, editor of *The Armchair Detective*.

To these names may be added those supplied by the editor of the *Dime Novel Round-Up* in a letter to the present writer: John Thompson, Police Captain Williams, A U. S. Detective, Gus Williams, Geraldine Fleming, Helen Compton Dale, Adah M. Howard, Maude A. Hilton, Dashing Charley, J. G. Bradley, Mrs. H. C. Hoffman, Arrah Leight, Harrigan and Hart, A Scotland Yard Detective, Old Cap Collier, Martha Eileen Holahan, Old Cap Darrell, Stick, Florence May Carroll, Lee Atwood, Hal Standish, and J. T. Brougham.

In the 1890s, Hanshew moved to England with his wife, Mary, and daughter, Hazel. In 1901 Ward Lock published his novel, *The World's Finger: an Improbable Story*. Its dedication reads: "To Harry Hall Squire as a type of the true Englishman (loyal, steadfast and sincere) this book, the first fruits of my pen in England, is inscribed as a token of esteem by his American friend the author."

The book was published the same year in the United States by C. E. Irwin. The sub-title now read "a London Mystery." It was reprinted by J. S. Ogilvie in 1905 under the title, *The Hoxton Mystery*. The Talbot Hatch checklist also lists the book as Number 13 of the Eureka Detective Series (an Ogilvie imprint) with a publication date of 1895.

Whenever the novel was first published, *The World's Finger* represented for Hanshew a break with his American dime novel days and an introduction to the new world of clothbound books. It also marks the first appearance of Mr. Maverick Narkom, Superintendent of Scotland Yard, whose mother was a ballet dancer and his father "a hawker of cat's meat." "Nature had gifted

[Narkom] with the face and bearing of an aristocrat and yet doomed him by birth to stand for ever, beyond the pale of society, upon the pedestal erected by his huckster father," (Chapter IV).

The strong hint of class consciousness is later repeated in the tales of Cleek, who is himself depicted as an aristocrat doomed by fate to be cut off from his heritage. (The story of his entry into the criminal profession is left tantalizingly vague.)

As many other detectives of his day, Narkom does not look like a detective, or so his creator states. At a trifle over 35 years of age he has already spent eight years in the detective force before being promoted to Superintendent. He would have been dangerously close to retirement by the end of the Cleek chronicles.

The drama of *The World's Finger* is that Narkom has been wooing a girl (Leah Herndon) who has chosen instead to marry an aristocrat. A murder occurs and the suspect (Lord Davanant) turns out to be the betrothed of the girl Narkom loves. He is identified by photographing the retina of the dead woman's eyes. Narkom plays the heavy in this story and is arrogant, vindictive, and petty. He mellows considerably in the next few years. Another detective (George Yardley) is called in and it is Leah Herndon herself who provides some vital clues and excellent deductions to overturn the case against Lord Davanant and proves that "Narkom and the rest of them are a pack of jackasses, and Scotland Yard a retreat for blind men . . ." Through the unwinding of the plot at least two ideas are used that will recur in the Cleek stories: the criminal disguised as a substitute policeman (so no one recognizes he is not the real one), and the double for the suspect.

The first book about Hamilton Cleek (his very name, it would seem, is one he assumed; we never learn his real one) was published by Cassell in England in 1910. A collection of twelve short stories, it was called *The Man of the Forty Faces*. In 1913, Hanshew rewrote the twelve stories as an episodic novel which was then republished by Cassell as *Cleek, the Man of the Forty Faces*. Divided into 35 untitled chapters, a prologue, and an epilogue, the novel omits three stories from the 1910 collection, but substitutes a new one and bridging material between the stories. Both books are dedicated to Newman Flower: "With that sort of esteem a man has for a friend he respects, and that sort of love he gives to a comrade he admires." Flower, the editor of *The Story-Teller* and later of *Cassell's Magazine*, may have been disappointed by sales of the first book and convinced Hanshew to try a different approach. Apparently Flower was correct, for after 1913, and for the next ten years there was scarcely a year without a volume of Cleek's adventures. After this, Hanshew changed publishers, but the reason is not clear. Cassell did publish *Cleek of Scotland Yard* in 1914, the same year that Hanshew died, and may have lost interest in the idea of pursuing the series as written by other hands. Between 1913 and 1920 there were three separate series of short stories about Cleek (at least 19 stories in all) in *Short Stories* magazine, so the material was available.

There is evidence that the Cleek books were very popular; the A. L. Burt edition of *Cleek of Scotland Yard* is illustrated with stills from a silent film version. But the author may never have realized the popularity of his creation, for he died in London on March 3, 1914.

But the books kept coming as they often did in the dime novel era when an originator died or quit writing a series. The following year the first true Cleek novel (one with only a single plot) appeared. In 1916 there was another "episodic" novel made up of several short stories with bridging material. These were *The Riddle of the Night* and *Cleek's Greatest Riddles*. There is

no record of the first appearing in England, but the second was published in both countries (the U.S. title was Cleek's *Government Cases*).

In 1918, the text of *The Man of the Forty Faces* was published in the United States under the title, *Cleek, the Master Detective*. Although four illustrations by Gordon Grant were added, the edition is identical with the London edition of 1910. To further confound matters, A. L. Burt later published an omnibus of Cleek books entitled *Cleek of Scotland Yard*. This volume contains the complete texts of *Cleek, the Man of the Forty Faces* (the episodic novel), *Cleek of Scotland Yard*, and six of the stories from *Cleek, the Master Detective*. Only two of these six stories ("The Riddle of the 5:28" and "The Riddle of the Siva Stones") do not appear in the first part of the omnibus as well. Whoever made the selection could not have read the material he was selecting.

In the same year that *Cleek, the Master Detective* was published, the second true novel in the chronicles was to appear in England. This was *The Riddle of the Purple Emperor*. It was the first of the books to bear the collaborative byline, "Thomas W. and Mary E. Hanshew." After this, the names are reversed and the remaining chronicles are by "Mary E. and Thomas W. Hanshew." The order may reflect the amount of material supplied by one or the other Hanshew, with *Purple Emperor* having more of Thomas W.'s original material.

At this point, some speculations must be attempted. The British Museum Catalogue attributes all of the books from *The Riddle of the Night* on to "Mary E. and Hazel Phillips Hanshew." In the case of *Night*, it is "by Mary E. and Hazel Phillips Hanshew, based on notes by Thomas W. Hanshew." In the directory of writers and their pen names (*Who's Whodunit* published by the University of North Carolina, 1969), Hazel Phillips Hanshew is a pseudonym for the other two Hanshews. Other evidence suggests she was their daughter. *The Author's and Writer's Who's Who and Reference Guide* (London, 1949) lists Hazel Phillips Hanshew as having been born in Brooklyn (no date given), married to Arnold Hackney, one daughter. She was living in England at the time, was a contributor to various women's publications, and had written two mystery novels herself, *Murder in the Hotel* (1931) and *The Riddle of the Winged Death* (1932). A review of the first book does not mention Cleek (as it most certainly would if he were a character). The title of the second would indicate that Cleek might well have inspired its writing. (Unfortunately, neither of these books was available in the preparation of this study.)

All of the Cleek books after Hanshew's were apparent collaborations, but the nature of this is impossible to determine. They may have been based on both published and unpublished material, including those 19 stories in *Short Stories*. The episodic novels (with the exception of *The Riddle of the Mysterious Light*) have no chapter titles and there is no indication of previous magazine appearance. The few known titles of the *Short Stories* series resemble Cleek-like themes which recur in the books, but there is not enough evidence for any solid comparisons. One story, "The Riddle of the Painted Shrine," would seem to fit the plot of Chapter 20 of *"The Riddle of the Mysterious Light*.

The Cleek chronicles, as can be imagined from his background, are the stuff of which dime novels are made. Fantastic mysteries, bizarre explanations (jewels being smuggled in the pouches of marsupials), melodramatic dialogue ("Gad!"—"Cinnamon!"—"Can no one read this riddle?"—"It is she, she, she!"), inconsistent and stereotyped characters, inconsistency in spelling of such a vital name as "Maurevania" (the first stories had it "MaurAvania"), rambling plot structure, they can only be appreciated fully as products of their time. It is always the month of June in the years before the Great War and Cleek is trying to relax at his riverside cottage with the faithful Dollops and

ever-patient Ailsa nearby. The red limousine with Lennard at the wheel and Narkom in the back seat comes up the drive. Cleek groans inwardly, for it was always a summons to action, a new riddle that only Cleek can read. If it is a really big case, the redoubtable Petrie and Hammond may be along as well. These two began their careers as Detective-Sergeants, and were promoted to Inspectors, but always behave like country constables.

(to be continued)

The Boy Scout Series Book Mess

By Bob Chenu

The development of the Boy Scout movement from 1910 on, together with the earlier boy organizations in this country and in England sparked a spate of Boy Scout fiction, and it is with a part of this fiction that I am going to try to deal in what follows.

Many collectors today specialize in Boy Scout fiction and non-fiction, and they find themselves faced with problems involving many "authors" and titles, caused by certain publishers reprinting stories and giving them new titles and attributing them to new "authors."

Donohue and Saalfield were among the chief culprits in such reprinting. It is found that their cheap reprint editions are a mixture which takes close comparison to unravel.

Donohue published the Boy Scout Series by G. Harvey Ralphson, the Boy Scout Series by Archibald Lee Fletcher, the Hickory Ridge Boy Scout Series by Capt. Alan Douglas, the Victory Boy Scout Series by Capt. Alan Douglas, and a combination Boy Scout—World War series by Capt. V. T. Sherman.

Of these, the Ralphson series was published in a good quality cloth bound format, while the rest are published in a cheaper format which uses cardboard binding and in many instances, very cheap quality paper. And the Ralphson stories reappear in new guise in some unexpected places. For instance, The Victory Boy Scouts series by Capt. Alan Douglas has listed as its 10th, 11th, and 12th titles respectively Boy Scout Electricians, Boy Scouts On The Open Plains, and Boy Scouts In An Airplane. These prove to be the 11th, 15th and 6th titles of the Ralphson Boy Scout Series.

Then if we take a close look at the Capt. V. T. Sherman series we find that *In The War Zone* is actually *Boy Scouts In The North Sea* by Ralphson. *Perils Of An Airship* is again *Boy Scouts In An Airship*, by Ralphson. *Boy Scouts With Joffre* is his *Boy Scouts In Belgium*. In fact, this whole series is a reprint mess in a class by itself. The *Runaway Balloon* is made up of *Boy Scout Signal Sender* and *Boy Scouts On A Long Hike* by Fletcher, the two being bound together as one book! Likewise *Boy Scouts On Old Superior* and *Boy Scouts In The Everglades* (Fletcher) comprise *The Boy Scout Signal*. *Capturing A Spy* is made up of *Boy Scouts Test Of Courage* and *Boy Scout Rivals*. A *Lost Patrol* is composed of *Boy Scouts Woodcraft Lesson* and *Boy Scout Pathfinder*. An *Interrupted Wigwag* is made up of *Boy Scouts In Northern Wilds* and *Boy Scouts On The Great Divide*. The *Call Of The Beaver Patrol* is a composite of *Boy Scouts In Coal Caverns* and *Boy Scouts In Alaska*. Thus the whole twelve Fletcher titles were doubled up to form 6 "new" books with new titles and with a new "author"'s name attached to them. This series also has still another stranger in its midst—*Scouting The Balkans In A Motor Boat* is *Motor Boat Boys On The Danube*, by Arundel.

Considering this group of authors it would appear that the Ralphson and Fletcher series were there first and were bastardized into the other series by a publisher who didn't care whether a boy was stung with a book he had al-

ready read or not. The Douglas series known as the **Hickory Ridge Boy Scout** series is another distinct series which was reprinted with titles somewhat changed, and with the three Ralphson books added at the end for good(?) measure, as the **Victory Boy Scout Series**.

Then there are the Saalfeld series which are similarly mixed up. The twelve titles by "Edward Griggs" were doubled up and printed by twos to form a "Durston" series. **Boy Scout Holiday & Boy Scouts Chance** by Griggs became Durston, **The Boy Scouts On The Trail**. **On The Trail & Mystery** became **Boy Scouts Afloat**. **Patriot & Hero** became **Boy Scouts Victory**. **Daring & Courage** became **Boy Scout Aviators**. **Struggle & Success** became **Boy Scouts In Camp**. **Adventure & Destiny** became **Boy Scouts To The Rescue**. Or was "Durston" split in two to become "Griggs"?

But this is only a start at the intertwining process. For example, Durston, **Boy Scouts On The Trail** is the same as Griggs' **Boy Scouts Holiday** plus **Boy Scouts Chance**. And they are also the same as Maitland, **Boy Scouts With The Allies**, and ALSO the same story as Blaine, **Boy Scouts In France** and Fiske's **Fighting In The Clouds For France**!

Fiske's **Fighting The German Foe** is the same story as Blaine's **Boy Scouts In England**, Durston's **Boy Scout Aviators**, Maitland's **Boy Scouts With King George**, and Griggs' **Boy Scouts Daring** and **Boy Scouts Courage**.

Untangling this snarl involves comparison of text, and necessitates having all of the books involved. I have many, but not all. Jim Froehlig, Chuck Fisk, and Harry Hudson have all given me some help, but more is needed to sort out all the details. So if any reader has books in these series and will correspond about them, I ask him to get in touch with me. I would especially like to hear from anyone with **Shelled By An Unseen Foe** by Fiske, and **Boy Scouts In Turkey** and **Boy Scouts On The Western Front** by Blaine.

(Bob's address is 16 Farragut Road, Merrick, N. Y. 11566.)

PACKSADDLE PRESS

LES BEITZ

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Mighty nice batch of old series hardbounds. As always with my offerings, if you're not tickled to death, purchase price will be gleefully refunded.

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HEYLIGER, WILLIAM—**The Loser's End**—Goldsmith, 1937.

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HOPE, LAURA LEE—**The Outdoor Girls** at Rainbow Lake; **The Outdoor Girls** in a Motor Car; **The Outdoor Girls** in a Winter Camp; **The Outdoor Girls** of Deepdale. All Grosset and Dunlap, 1913. All are from same library, well cared for. Condition best described as Extra Fine \$2.25 each pp

PORTER, HORACE—**Our Young Aeroplane Scouts in Russia**—Burt, 1915.

Sound, tight, very good condition throughout \$2.25 pp
RALPHSON, CAPTAIN GEORGE H.—**Over There with the Doughboys** at St

Mihiel. Donohue, 1919. Very good shape, but spine somewhat worn \$2.00 pp
TOMLINSON, EVERETT T.—**Four Boys on the Mississippi**—G & D, 1908.

Very good shape. All illustrations by H. C. Edwards intact. Some cover wear; also, some kid rubber-stamped his name on fore-edges. A quite elusive title, however, and well worth \$2.50 pp

Hundreds more of this type material on my shelves here. Write specific wants.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mr. LeBlanc:

I wonder if you would be so kind as to print something about the following in some forthcoming issue of *Dime Novel Roundup*?

At the Modern Language Association annual conference to be held in Chicago after the Christmas holidays in 1973, a seminar will be held titled "American Myth and Character in Juvenile Popular Literature." It will be chaired by Professor Ivor A. Rogers of Drake University. Attendance will be limited to 35 individuals. It is possible to receive permission to attend one meeting of the MLA even though one is not a member, but first seats must be allocated to MLA members. We will not know the exact time or date of the meeting until the final program is set in September, but interested individuals should write to Professor Rogers at P. O. Box 1068, Des Moines, IA 50311 for further information.

The plan for the seminar is to present the attendees with a series of very short research notes and bibliographies, and then to continue for the remainder of the seminar with a discussion of bibliographic and scholarly problems in the area.

Even though you are not a member of MLA, we would like your help and assistance. If you are currently working on a study of juvenile literature (any genre, boys or girls, and especially post-Civil War) send 40 (forty) copies of your current work, problems, areas of research, projected bibliographies, etc. Please try to limit yourself to the front and back of one 8 1/2 by 11 inch sheet of paper. We are not looking for "papers" or complete bibliographies, just general outlines of what you are working on. Include pleas for help and assistance in locating particular works or assistance in compiling bibliographies. Libraries with specialist holdings in the field are also asked to send a brief description of their collections. We cannot accept buy and sell notice or be commercial about this in any way, but I think that it would be acceptable to list one or

two dealers that you have found helpful in your dealings—just don't list yourself. The emphasis will be on JUVENILES, not books for children, and the idea is to co-ordinate and bring together the scholarship in a very complex field that has needed study for a long time. Because this has been a neglected field of scholarship, there is a need to share the experiences and work of the collectors in the field with the librarians and teachers. Hopefully we can work together. If you publish any sort of magazine, journal, newsletter, or occasional fanzine, it will be possible to distribute a few back issues of your publication and have subscription blanks or fliers advertising your publication available for the participants in the seminar, but these must reach the above address by Sep. 1, 1973. Sheets describing your activities must reach the above address by October 1, 1973 so that they may be mailed out to the participants before the meeting.

Sincerely,

Ivor A. Rogers

A DIME NOVEL COLLECTOR'S BOOK SHELF

THE COWBOYS, by William H. Forbis. Time-Life Books, New York. First of a series on the West to be sold on a subscription basis. Of special interest to dime novel collectors are the two pages of dime novel covers associated with ranching or cowboys.

Back numbers Reckless Ralph's Dime Novel Roundup (quite a few reprints, can't be helped). Don't have the complete set of No. 1 to 237 inclusive, but almost, lacking only a few numbers. 10c each or \$21.00 postpaid. Have at least 230 numbers or more. Also two indexes, 1 Pioneer and Scouts of the Old West, Birthday number. War Library list and Dime Novel Catalog.

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MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

24 Capt. Frank C. Acker, USN (Ret.), 3356 Nahatan Way, Las Vegas, Nev. 89109 (Change of address).

358. Vernon Tyner, 11 Maple Ave., Avoca, N. Y. 14809 (New member)

359. David B. MacAusland, 2 Irving Dr., San Anselmo, Cal. 94960 (New mem.)

360. John R. Deveny, 6805 Cheyenne Trail, Edina, Minn. 55435 (New mem.)

158. Joseph Goggin, 6202 Greeley Blvd., Springfield, Va. 22152 (Correction of address)

361. Richard R. Seddon, 4 Edgewater Place, Winchester, Mass. 01890 (New member).

245. Bob Dawson, P. O. Box 38, Hazlet, N. J. 07730 (Change of address)

RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES CONCERNING DIME NOVELS

EDWARD LE BLANC'S SECRET LIFE, by Carol Stocker, illustrated article appearing in the RHODE ISLANDER, a supplement to the Sunday Providence Journal, February 25, 1973. A very good article about your editor's dime novel collecting.

RALPH GARDNER'S LUCK; or, THE PREVIOUSLY UNPUBLISHED NOVEL BY HORATIO ALGER, JR., by James Smart. A review of the recently published Alger "first" edition of Silas Snodben's Office Boy, Doubleday & Co., \$5.95. A good review in the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin for Friday, February 2, 1973. (Clipping sent in by Mrs. Edith Leithead and Charles T. Marsteller.)

PLUCK STILL PAYS. Anonymous. A review of Silas Snodben's Office Boy in the Los Angeles Times, Jan. 31, 1973. (Clipping sent in by David Soibelman.)

HORATIO ALGER SUCCEEDS AGAIN. Another review of Silas Snodben's Office Boy, this time in the Christian Science Monitor of January 25, 1973. Melvin Maddocks is the author and he reviews Alger's life as well as the publication of a new Alger first edition. (Clipping sent in by John T. Dizer, Jr.)

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